

Spinsterization of Women or Spinster Women in the Arab Women's Literature: An Imposed Reality or a Rejected Choice? Hayfā' Bayṭār's Novel, *Nisā' bi Aqfāl/Women in Locks*¹, as a Sample

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ABSTRACT

In my opinion, the art of the novel is an invented female art. It is a product of the hidden depths and interiors of the woman's suffering. "Every woman is pregnant of her 'novel' as one critic argued and therefore, she does not see it necessary to write it on paper as long as she lives sit. The woman is a creator and an artist in her nature and it is sufficient for us to say the mistress of narrators is a woman called Scheherazade, who is the mistress of the tales the Arab nights, namely, *Alf Laila wa Laila*. What proves my view strongly is the historical error that literary historians and critics committed when they argued that the author of *Alf Laila wa Laila* is an 'anonymous author' instead of analyzing it stylistically in order to understand that its author is an 'anonymous woman' who could not put her name on the tales under a religious oppressive culture that is full of taboos. In my opinion, Hayfā' Bayṭār is the mistress of female narration in her search of 'lost freedom'. Nothing was left for the woman through which she could achieve her existence except talking and writing, after she had been raped physically and spiritually. In my opinion, the novel of this study, *Nisā' bi Aqfāl/Women in Locks* is a novel of yearning for freedom for the women who live under norms and traditions that escalate with the escalation of extremism and fanaticism, and suppression of the prohibited trilogy of religion, sex and politics. The man managed to imprison the woman and captivate her with his taboos behind invisible bars that made her live in an exile, and alienation within her homeland. Like Scheherazade, she can either talk or die, and 'death' here is in a memory that rapes one's soul as the body is raped. By the written 'word', she exposes 'rape' and protests against injustice, and by self-revelation, the woman's presence overcomes her absence. Writing is a medical instrumentality that grants the woman liberation, emancipation, and purification with which, she reveals the psychological accumulations and piled bitter memories, and denude a reality which resembles a play that is repeated on the ears of history and its thresholds.

Key words: Spinsterhood, Taboos, The Penis-man, Unconsciousness and Insensitivity, Sado-Masochism, Hellish Circle, Projectional Raping Manoeuvre

INTRODUCTION

The novel is a narrative genre of prose that has become open onto life, its changes, and dynamics. It also has the ability seek help from a lot of artistic, literary, and cultural components that fall in a parallel area to it and integrate them in its body. This has made it currently noticeable in all national and international literatures and languages. The novel, specifically, as the American writer Susan Sontag says, struggles against the dryness that people feel, no matter what the type, form, and time of dryness is. It is a story that adopts 'narration' including description, dialogue, and conflict between the characters, besides the crisis, tension, argument, and events that the narration entails. The novel describes imaginary characters and events in the form of a serial story. It is also the largest narrative genres from

the point of view of size, multiplicity of characters, and variety of events².

Spinsterhood as a Term

"Spinsterhood" is a sophisticated and controversial term. Some people support and accept the term, considering it as a term that reflects one of the psychological and social problems that exist in all societies. Other people oppose the use of this term because they think that it decreases the value of the people who are described or stigmatized with it.

Though the term of 'spinsterhood' is a descriptive one that applies to both sexes, males and females, the culture of the Arab societies focuses on the female 'spinsterhood' more than on the male 'spinsterhood'. They consider it a reality that is imposed on women in most cases and it is not an

optional thing. Besides, it is connected to the age of women's fertility and giving birth, while in the case of men, it is mostly optional.

The Term (عَسَتْ=anasa): Definition:

The following section discusses the various meanings of the root verb: (عَسَتْ/anasa = become a spinster) with regard to females and males as it is explained in well-known Arabic dictionaries:

• Females:

- According to most Arabic dictionaries, 'anasat al-Mara'ah عَسَتْ المرأة, means: the woman became a *spinster*.
- According to al-Assma'i, if we say (عَسَتْها/annasuha or unnisat/(عَسَتْ (in the passive voice), it means: her parent prevented her from getting married till she reached her middle-age without marriage.
- According to al-Jawhari, (anasat al-jariya/the maid became a spinster) means: she stayed at her parent's home till crossed the age of virginity. However, if she marries once, she is no more a 'spinster'.
- According to al-Farra', (imra'ah ānis) means: she beyond middle-age and is married yet.

• Males:

- The Arabs say: (رَجُلٌ عَانِسٌ) rajul anis = a spinster man, which means: a man who becomes an adult, or he has reached the age of getting married, but is still unmarried yet.

• Males and Females:

- (عَانِسٌ/-/anis) can be used for males and females, who have reached the commonly accepted age for marriage but they are not married yet. The term is mostly used for females
- According to Ibn Manzur's *Lisan al-Arab*: (عَسَتْ المرأة anasat al-Mar'ah) means: she is: (ānis/عَانِسٌ = unmarried) though she became mature and reached the age of getting married. If we say: ('uonnisat/عَسَتْ = she was made ānis = a spinster), if she became an adult and got old, but remained unmarried at her parents' home)³.

The main important conclusion from these details is that the term عَانِسٌ rajul anis = spinster, can be used for males and females, and Arabic is not biased to either sex, but the linguistic use of the word established the difference, and settled in people's minds the idea that spinsterhood is specific to females, and it is a defective shame that occurs to them, and excludes them from the natural state of normality.

Linguists did not ignore this issue and most of them said that 'the term is used more for women' than for men. By that, they expressed the values of the male society and its interests. It is no wonder to notice that linguists elaborate in their definition of 'women spinsters' and decrease in their definition of 'men's spinsters'.

It deserves pointing out here that a number of linguists permitted the use of the verb (anasat/عَسَتْ) for the woman if she is active and has her own will, while others argued that "we do not say 'عَسَتْ anasat' and we can say unnisat عَسَتْ and her parents annasuha/they made her ānis, which means that they prevented from having a husband". In other words,

they tried to rob her of her will and make her decision in the hands of others.

The term 'unusah/عُنُوسَةٌ' or 'uzooba عَزُوبَةٌ' is used to refer to 'uzoubiyat al-shabab wa al-fatayat = the unmarried period of young people who grew beyond the ordinary legal age of marriage⁴. Often, the term 'ānis' refers to a woman who desires to get married but she does not get a husband⁵.

Spinsterhood from the sociological perspective means that the male and the female grew beyond the age of marriage according to the common norm, and that they missed the train of married life, and they did not enter life because life in people's norm is the wedlock⁶.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spinsterhood among the Arab Poets

Spinsterhood of the woman among the Arab poets was represented in samples from Arabic literature in different ways. For example, al-'Asha⁷ distinguished between the girl, the spinster, and the laughing woman.

يَوْمَ فَفَّتْ حُمُولُهُمْ فَتَوَلَّوْا قَطْعُوا مَعَهْدَ الْخَلِيْطِ فَشَاقِرُوا
حُرَّةً طَفْلَةً الْأَنْامِلِ كَالْمَيْمَةِ لَا عَانِسٌ وَلَا مِهْزَاقٌ

The remarkable thing in this quotation is al-Asha's robbery of the 'spinster' and the 'mihzaq'/'laughing one' of their freedom and granting it to the baby girl. He actually makes her like a 'doll' as a sign of her beauty, tenderness, and young age. Besides, the term 'spinster' is used to refer to 'wine' in several lines of Arabic poetry. Probably, reference to 'wine' as a 'spinster' refers to 'mind corruption'. It seems that they also saw the 'spinster' as a mindless woman. Ibn Tabataba⁸ the Alawite said:

مَخْدَرَةٌ مَكْنُونَةٌ قَدْ تَكْتَفَتْ كَرَاهِيَةَ بَيْنِ الْجِسَانِ الْأَوَانِسِ
مُتَعَشِّعَةٌ مَرِهَاءٌ مَا جَلَّتْ إِنِّي أَرَى مِثْلَهَا عَذْرَاءَ فِي زِيٍّ عَانِسِ

The 'spinster' in these lines represents 'jars of wine'. She is a 'costume', and the 'wine' symbolizes the 'virgin' lady. The 'Jars of whine' have no value and the purpose is the 'wine'. Pleasure is in the 'wine' and not in the 'jars'. All these images emphasize the emptiness inside the spinster. She is only an appearance, but she is void of any real value inside for others and she can be abandoned.

Al-Buhturi⁹, however, sees in her a bad omen and that she is ugly:

قَدْ قُلْتُ لِلْمَسْدُودِ فِي عَانِسِ شَوْهَاءَ، يَضْحِي وَهُوَ صَبَّ بِهَا

Ibn Sana' al-Mulk¹⁰ showed the linguistic differences that the Arab linguists adopted in order to describe the condition of the spinster girl:

أَوْحَشَنِي الْأَوَانِسُ هُنَّ الطَّبَا الْكَوَانِسِ
وَهُوَ فَتَاةٌ مُعْصِرٌ فِيكَ وَفِيهِمْ عَانِسِ

The spinster for Ibn al-Rumi¹¹ is associated with old women who are associated with weakness, helplessness, and change in their physical and mental conditions. He said:

عَانِسٌ تَقَهَّرُ الشَّبَابَ عَجُوزٌ بِنْتُ قَرْنٍ مِنَ الزَّمَانِ وَقَرْنٌ

Abu Mansour al-Tha'alibi took a decision regarding the order of the woman's age in Chapter Seven of his book *Fiqh al-Lugha wa Asrar al-Arabiya/Language Philology and Secrets of Arabic*. He said: She is a baby (tifla) as long as she is small, then she is (walida); then she is a (ka'eb) if her breasts grew (ka'aba); then she is (nahed) if it grew, then she

is (mu'ser) if she (adrakat), and then a (spinster), if she grew above the limit of (I'ssar); then she is (khawd) if she is in the middle of her youth, then, (muslef) if she passes the age of forty, then (nassaf) if she is between youth and oldness, then she is (shahla kahla) if she becomes an elderly but she still has some power and forbearance; then (shahbara) if she becomes old but is still firm; then she is (haizaboun) if she is old in age and powerless; then she is (qla'am) and (latlat) if her back bent and her teeth fell.¹²

Ma'n bin Aws al-Muzni¹³ employed the word (ānis) spinster to indicate the palm tree, and this employment is far from the original meaning of the term (ānis), which is the poet's innovation:

كَأَنَّمَا هِيَ عَائِسٌ تَصَدَّى
تَخْشَى الْكَسَادَ وَتُحِبُّ النَّقْدَا
فَهِيَ تَرْدَى بَعْدَ بُرْدٍ بُرْدَا

It is noticed that this employment is intended to show weakness and exhaustion (تَرْدَى) and the yellow color (الصدى) and recession, which refers to inability of selling something because of lack of interest in it. All these indications are negative and try to steal the life that the word ānis/spinster can beat in it.

Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri¹⁴ had a negative outlook at the spinster. For him, she is an old girl whose black hair mixed with her white hair:

مَهْرَتْ الْفَتَاةَ الْأَحْمَسِيَّةَ نَثْرَةً عَلَى أَنَّ أقراني غَضَابُ أَحَامِسُ
مُعَيَسَةً إِنْ جَاءَهَا الرَّمْحُ خَاطِبًا سَفْتَهُ دُعَافَ المَوْتِ شَمَطَاءُ عَائِسُ

Al-Sarī al-Sarī al-Raffā¹⁵ gives a different image to this negative image of the spinster. For him, she continues to bear the beauty of youth, as if she were a bride:

وَدَارَتْ عَلَى التُّدْمَانِ مِنْ خَمْرِ بَابِلِ غَرُوسٌ حَوَتْ حُسْنَ الصَّبَا وَهِيَ عَائِسُ

Though the term ānis/spinster was employed in most Arabic poetry to refer to the female who remained unmarried, it is also used to refer to the man who remained unmarried as we see in the following lines by Abū Dhu'ayb al-Hudhalī¹⁶:

أَلَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي هَلْ تَنْظُرُ خَالِدٌ عِيَادِي عَلَى الْهَجْرَانِ أَمْ هُوَ يَائِسُ
فَإِنِّي عَلَى مَا كُنْتُ تَعَهَّدُ بَيْنَنَا وَلِيذِينَ حَتَّى أَنْتَ أَشْمَطُ عَائِسُ

We have introduced here a few samples out of many, as if all the poets had their unilateral viewpoint about the spinster woman. As a result, they gave her a negative image and made her an inactive element as all of them believe that 'spinsterhood' kills the soul and suffocates the emotion. These samples imitate the social, cultural, and epistemological reality that the spinster lives. Thus, the written literature about the spinster turned to be another weapon that is raised against her in order to present her in a negative image. The popular proverb "A shadow of a man is better than a shadow of a wall" (لا ظل رجل ولا ظل حيطه) *zhil ragel wala zhil hetta* and its content is an implied reflection to the social evaluation to a lot of the woman's issues and problems, including the problem of spinsterhood.

THE STUDY

The above discussion leads to the red lines that are related to the issue of 'spinsterhood'. In my view as a researcher in feminist literature is that there is nothing that can be considered in the area of taboo in literature in general because it is the right of every writer to write on the subject that he/

she likes and desires, including the issues that are classified as taboo subjects. The writer can write on these subjects through symbolism.

However, what really happens is that each writer practices a kind of strict censorship that springs from his unconscious mind on his writing. Ultimately, he does not write anything if he does not believe in it or is not actually convinced of it, because writing is an operation of translating thoughts and transference of attitudes into an integrated entity. In my opinion, the literary work, whatever it is, does not become complete at all unless its writer is schizophrenic, and in this case, he writes thoughts that are far from his feelings and personal convictions, and thus, there is no taboo areas in literature.

This study seeks to show the brutality of the look at the spinster on the literary level, which should be more considerate to her, and refuse this bad attitude towards her, and bias against her and her feelings.

Reasons for Writing this Study

Here are the main reasons for conducting this research study.

- Shortage of literary studies on the subject of the study and lack of treatment of it as a literary issue, as most studies that have been conducted are field studies only.
- The desire to know more about the subject, which constitutes a serious social and psychological issue that people are aware of it, but writers avoid dealing with it.
- The researcher's desire to know the degree of the impact of the theme of spinsterhood on the woman's character in the literature of the Arab woman writer.
- Emergence of the phenomenon of spinsterhood in a controversial way, which motivated me to choose it to be the topic of this study.

The Goal of the Study

One of the goals of the researcher is to add a new study on a new area that interests researchers to the library of scientific studies in order to encourage other researchers to conduct other studies about the status of the spinster in her society.

Significance of the Study

- The significance of the study lies in raising the readers' awareness and society in general about the psychological suffering of spinsters in their daily life and make a positive change in people's attitudes about spinsters in the Arab society.
- Interest in the psychological conditions of spinsters, and an attempt to know some of the confusions and problems that spinsters suffer from through what is exposed in women's literature.

DISCUSSION

The novel of *Nisā' bi Aqfāl/Women with Locks*¹⁷ sheds light on the problem of spinsterhood in the Arab world and the dimensions that it constitutes besides the crisis of the social

values that put on the woman unbearable burdens. Hayfā' Bayṭār introduces in her novel types of women who missed the train of marriage and turned into symbols of failure in life as society describes them. Bayṭār challenges the phenomenon of spinsterhood in her novel through introducing samples of women who grow beyond the commonly accepted age for marriage, and as a result, they become victims in their oriental society. Hayfā' Bayṭār tries to reveal the spinster's suffering and the defeats that accompany her condition, which are caused by the social environment and social traditions that surround the spinster and make her an introvert person.

The writer enters the depth of that condition and derives psychological analyses through the character of Dr. Hanādy, who sought to submit a thesis about this female social sector through a personal experience that she exploited and employed in order to submit her study in this field.

The novel starts from a touching story about Nādyā's character, the teacher who had no luck like other girls in finding a man to marry her and 'protect' her from people's looks and a closed society that sees the woman who has no husband as an incomplete one. The writer excels in drawing the features of the 'spinster' who found herself standing handcuffed in front of the teachings of the traditional family.

Nādyā's friends are: Sanā', Taghrīd, Du'ā', Jūlie, Hāla, Amāl, and psychologist Hanādy. However, Julie, who is free from the burdens of her society, rebels against its traditions, wanders with her freedom, but does not find love after her society rejects her.

Du'a', who isolated herself like a nun in order to dismiss the woman's natural need, becomes a dead body at the end, unconscious and senseless; Hāla, the customs clearer who is forced to sleep with a young man who works at her office and consumes him like a commodity that satisfies her instinct; and Amāl, who puts an end to the hell of her life with a decision of committing suicide after she lost her fiancé in a car accident. After that, she became a mistress of her dead fiancé so that other fiancés keep away from her home. The psychologist Hanādy, who wrote about them in her thesis after she decided to take up the challenge of attending a conference about 'spinsterhood', read the stories of these spinsters, who "lost their life".

These are samples of women who entered the world of spinsterhood forcibly and were disappointed. They decided to enter the world of 'sex' after they lost hope in finding a husband, but they discovered that sex does not constitute their only request from the man, and sex is only a small part of what the woman needs from him.

Houriya Āgbāl says about forced spinsterhood: 'forced spinsterhood' refers to spinsterhood that is imposed by one side of society on the male and female alike. Its reason is attributed to several economic, social, and cultural, sometimes, family circumstances. For example, the father imposes on his daughter and forces her to marry this or that, and thus, she finds herself in the shadow of spinsterhood. Her education can also be a cause of her spinsterhood when she finds herself obliged to continue her studies, and consequently, she misses the age of marriage¹⁸. It should be pointed out

here that there is also 'optional spinsterhood', which can be attributed to the girl herself which result from her exaggerated conditions regarding her future husband, or her absolute refusal to get married and preference to be independent. The girl can also be of the type who cannot bear the husband's authority and control, who knows nothing except violence as a means for making a dialogue¹⁹.

In the novel of this study, *Nisā' bi Aqfāl/Women with Locks*, Hayfā' Bayṭār puts the issue of spinsterhood under her fictional microscope so that this novel will become a mirror that reflects the ghost of spinsterhood, where the woman who has crossed the commonly agreed upon age is crossed, is stigmatized socially as a 'spinster', and is accused after that by 'deviation'²⁰. With regard to the relationship between stigma of 'deviation'²¹ of the spinster, Jamal Ma'tuq argues that 'stigma' is considered a negative mental image that sticks to a certain individual that expresses resentment to and surprise at this individual, which exists in our society, and it touches the majority of society individuals with resentment and surprise²².

According to Samia Jaber, the stigmatized person faces several social and psychological problems that are caused by the others that make him find difficulties in adjusting to them due to the inferiority look with which his society look at him. This makes the stigmatized person have some sort of moral breakdown and self-confidence, after which he weakens and feels unable to create or even work; stigma affects the mind of the stigmatized, his feelings and behavior, which makes him behave in the way that society expects him to behave. Here lies the relationship between the stigmatizing side and the stigmatized side, and out of this relationship deviation of the stigmatized person appears²³.

In my view, and in light of what has been said above, there is an interactive relationship between 'stigma', and the 'deviation' of the spinster which occurs through society's ignorance and contempt to her because she did not have any opportunity to get married, which might push her to have some deviational behavior.

Based on that, deviation might grow and develop because of society. Amāl bin 'Issa considers 'spinsterhood' a social phenomenon which means that 'the girl stays at her parents' home after reaching the common age of marriage in comparison with the prevailing age in the society that she lives in. This phenomenon creates effects and reflections on the spinster girl, and that is attributed to several causes including: expensive dowries, continuing education, fear of marriage, and taking responsibility. All these are factors that helped the spread of this phenomenon. The pressing events that the spinster lives in this age-stage raises the average of frustration, which appears in psychological confusions that lead, in turn, to behavioral deviational confusions that are represented in immoral relations such as a 'befriending' and 'dating' with a boyfriend²⁴.

With regard to deviation and immoral decay of the spinster, Shams al-Din says: It is one of the most dangerous things that spinsterhood can cause. Its effects appear on the spinster and society. Some of these effects include: prostitution, adultery, and "flesh trade", whose results include:

sexual diseases, illegitimate children, increase in abortion, family collapse, and poverty. The spinster often falls in sins because she believes false promises and 'sweet talk' that artists of spinster-hunter are perfect at. After the passing sin, the spinster's professional work and earning one's livelihood starts²⁵.

Finally, 'Adel Fawzi's definition of 'spinsterhood' constitutes the best reply to the justifications and clarifications to the violence that some people connect to the spinster's condition: spinsterhood is a marginalized condition and it is rejected by both society and parents, though it is hard to accept by the individual who lives it whether the spinster is a man or a woman²⁶.

In her novel *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, Hayfā' Bayṭār describes the spinsters' suffering in their human dimension in the shadow of an unfair social mentality against the woman. Besides, it also highlights a list of taboos that the woman is exposed to in a traditional male culture, whose hardest taboo is related to 'love' and 'freedom'. The woman suffers from the man's dual outlook towards her in a society that is afraid of a public sin but does not care of what it does in secret. Hayfā' Bayṭār is the first writer who introduces the problematics of the woman's middle-age, and the unjust view about fifty-years old women as if they became sexless creatures, or that their femininity weakened, while the society's view about a fifty years old man differs completely from its view about a fifty years old woman. For example, it is quite ordinary for a fifty-year old man to think about marrying a young lady who is about half his age, which is blessed and acceptable.

Nisā' bi Aqfāl is a novel of shaking and refusal of social and intellectual concepts of fifty years old women. Through the "spinsters' group", we know about the life experience of every woman. The age of 'fifty' is the age of disappearance of illusions and emancipation from the slavery of her sexual instinct, if we may say so.

Nisā' bi Aqfāl is a novel that deals with women, whose consciousness is occupied with 'time'. Therefore, we follow suffering as they are wrapped with cruel loneliness that tears them between their desires and the shackles of society that they live in, and in which the female fears to become a spinster in the course of time. Thus, the women suffer in this novel from two identical pains: *first*, a social religious pain that rapes them with its taboos, and *second*, an internal psychological pain that is penetrated by the crisis of loneliness and ruin that the woman lives. It is a pain that writhes and moves thirstily; each one identifies with the other, and each takes the color of the other because of shame, taboo, traditions and legacies; terms that a conservative society practices in with its norms in an aim to violate the woman's life and rob her of her freedom of speech about her emotions and feelings.

The main part of the novel is concerned with four women who live in a male environment and are surrounded by visions and thoughts that turn them into a marginalized entity that receives men's desires and limitless lust. Therefore, Bayṭār's text leaks with thoughts that discusses and analyzes fakeness, and false morals, and put the reader in front of destroyed women, who face the futility of their destinies that

are subject to their male society. Therefore, the text of the novel provokes the reader and takes his thoughts to various and multiple directions, and the writer have no qualms about exposing the vast quantity of lies that the events of the novel reflect.

The narrative movement starts in *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* by the focal character, Nādyā, the heroine of the novel. Nādyā is a woman who exceeded the age of fifty, and thus, she became in her society's view a 'spinster', who has to be shaded by the family instructions, and devote her life to protect her renown, and take care of her nephew. Nādyā is the woman who started to feel that she has missed the marriage train, and therefore, she raised the flag of rebellion: "in the age of fifty, women tear the virginity of 'silence' and teach its chastity"²⁷.

From the first moment, Hayfā' Bayṭār puts us in the image so that we can realize the size of pressures that Nādyā is exposed to: "One thousand and one thoughts intersected in Nādyā's mind, and she seemed to inaugurate the greatest revolution in her life. She felt that the crowdedness of thoughts and their conflict is like a battlefield. She pressed her temples strongly with her palms, as if she were preventing the explosion of her skull, and pressed her teeth, and repeated: Enough! Enough! My head will explode because of the pressure of thoughts"²⁸! These pressures also include the place. "She stares at the eternal furniture around her; furniture that reminds her of every second in her life, half a century..."²⁹. Nādyā dives in her canned time, feeling her loss: "Her heart shuddered, and she is aware of what it means that a woman has reached the age of 'fifty'... it is a smashing feeling that makes her feel that she has lost her life... she lived her life in eternal yearning to get real rich things that yearn to fulfill her emotions, and feelings of satisfaction, richness, participation and joy... she rose up from her place, as if the bitter truth has bitten her:

Your age has been lost, Nādyā"³⁰. "Nādyā takes her decision to enter a body experience with men whom she met in her life, starting with the X-Ray doctor, who treats her as a commodity, then with her friend's husband, and finally the hairdresser, whose experience with him passes lukewarmly as if he was a tool: "It was a decision that cannot be postponed, like all her previous decisions. From where did that courage come? She summoned all those probable men to her sexual adventure to her mind... she will inaugurate her freedom with one of them"³¹

Nādyā falls a victim for ambiguous feelings between a feeling of 'guilt' and 'enjoyment of the pleasure of discovering the man's body. There, in a room of a woman who was struggling with loneliness and repression, the tape of painful memories moves: "She does not forget at all the first time when her father caught her watching an obscene pornographic movie; a man who was having sex with three lesbian women. She felt her heart falling; actually, she felt that his voice was bumping onto the floor tiles; she stood in the dark saloon watching her father, who had turned his back to her and the movie, too; her feelings were full of hatred to him were exploding in her entity; how does he allow himself to enjoy rights and do things while he prevents others from doing them? By what right, by what right?"³²

Nādyā despises her father: “Your father will stare at you with a scolding look if he knows that you speak on the mobile with your colleague at work. He reminds you that your honest renown is the basis of your existence and acceptance by the society of hypocrisy, and at night, he looks for his pleasure at sex movies. When he shuts the codes of the channels, you feel exactly that he locks the imaginary chastity belt that strongly presses on your pelvis and between your thighs”³³.

Mariam Frehat (1995) says: the role of the woman in the Arab society is in the service of the man. She is merely a tool that works in serving the man and securing his comfort, unlike her role in the Western society, where she decides her self-assertion. This service appears clearly in the mother’s constant performance of the father’s will³⁴. Therefore, Nādyā’s revolution is against the shackles that tie her in order to prevent her from living her life as she likes: “You will inaugurate sex freedom, you will practice it in length and width,... she called to her mind possible women for her sexual adventures, she will inaugurate her freedom with one of them... and out of the several possible men for her sexual revolution, she favored three... the X-Ray doctor, whose clinic she visited three years ago to have an X-ray photo for her breasts in order to be certain about her safety; on that day, he looked at her breasts surprisingly, and said: I do not believe that your age is forty-seven, as your breasts are ones for a twenty year old young girl”³⁵. This doctor, who shocked her with his brutality, was talking sweetly in order to crack-down on her like a sexual prey, as he had the weapons that enable him to attack her in this field. Nādyā felt that at the first moments of their first meeting: “When she entered his office, he smiled a broad smile, knowing that he liked her because he made her feel that he understood the purpose of her visit... he caressed her breasts daringly, and she wondered why he ‘invited her to lunch on his farm...’³⁶, while he was treating her like a cheap woman:

She wondered while she gave in to his hungry kisses, and his nervous fingers were undressing her; can’t he be gentle, “more human... she did not notice how he undressed her so quickly... she looked at his erect penis with a neutral cold look, but she felt in her depths the shock of the miracle; is this the taboo thing? Is it the forbidden thing? She was about to touch it, he said to her as the hissing of his lust was bursting out of his voice: it’s yours, take it, take it, but she was startled by his expression; she retreated and felt that she was lost and strongly wanted to cry. He ordered her to kneel; he turned her on her back, and forced her to kneel in a specific way, which was more of intimidation than persuasion... she surrendered because she suddenly turned into a woman who is strange to her. He slapped concessive strong slaps on her buttocks; she was taken by surprise at the meaning of these slaps; she felt complete ignorance; she thought that the body was also ignorant exactly like the mind, and suddenly she felt a burning pain that tore her anus. She cried madly: what are you doing! I’m dying... she said: you’ll enjoy this way... she continued crying and the tears of pain falling from her eyes, and the feelings of being smashing were crushing her; she was unable to move as he fixed her strongly by making

her kneel and imprisoned her between his solid legs.³⁷ Nādyā gives more details that the reader might see disgusting such as: “It is a shit of an experience, Nādyā. Say it openly!”³⁸.

The question that rises here is: why did Nādyā stay in his bed? The answer, in my view, is that she was struck by a state of a servile paralysis that made her lose her sense of direction before the man surprises her after a short while with another stab: “We will try it another way now. She felt another stab of pain and humiliation from the words ‘we will try it’, as if they were entertaining; he seized her by her hand and led her to his penis... she caught that mythical thing, which started growing in her hand; she thought it was one of the seven wonders of the world; that thought made her burst with a roaring laughter, as if all her pain and feelings of humiliation turned into laughter”³⁹.

That was an insulting experience with all criteria with which, Nadia felt of emptiness: “The only truth that I learned from that experience is that the sexual act is for insult and humiliation”⁴⁰. Nādyā “feels she has a very deep wound; for the first time she becomes aware that the woman’s sexual organ looks like a wound, an incurable wound”⁴¹. Then the doctor deflowers her: “I felt how he let loose his body weight over her; I felt how he opened a closed tunnel between her thighs and the flow of a sticky hot liquid... and a loud laughter roared: I do not believe, do not believe that you are a virgin; he inserted a pile of paper in her bleeding wound and hastened to the bathroom to wash...⁴². After “her first catastrophic sexual experience”⁴³, Nādyā insists on continuing her way of body discovery. She “insisted on having sexual intercourse, not for pleasure, but for the purpose of fueling life... she could no more practice female masturbation, which bequeathed her a suffocating depression, and deepened her feeling of loneliness and exclusion...”⁴⁴.

The *second* man who jumped to her mind as a possible boyfriend was her hairdresser. She noticed his lustful looks that he used to send her through the mirror: “Once, she intentionally let her hairpin fall down into the opening of her shirt; the hairpin was stuck in the groove between her breasts; he extended his hand to pick it up, but she kept his hand away angrily and said: “I will return it to you”⁴⁵. Then we read: “The hairdresser was disappointed after an engagement that continued for two years, and therefore, she did not need a lot of effort for a desire to flame them... each of them felt that his duty was to express to the other his love and yearning, as if they were embarrassed about practicing an unripe sex that was void of emotion... Monday’s sexual intercourse makes her feel the futility of life, the pleasure of rebellion against them; it makes her feel that she extends her tongue into their faces, scolding them, happy at their unhappiness; I am no more a stamped thing, I am no more locked,... I will not leave life as a virgin, you, cruel people”⁴⁶.

The *third* man who came to mind was her friend’s husband, whom she divorced because of his repeated betrayals to his wife: “He was a good-looking man, and had a captivating presence; every time he met her, he would say to her: “You, crazy one, live your life and don’t care about those sadistic ignorant people who steal your life... sex is an incomparable pleasure; don’t deny it to yourself, you’re foolish!”⁴⁷

The humiliating images with the doctor and the hairdresser flow onto her memory till she becomes a city that is plowed by airplanes; Nādyā feels sarcastic at her relationship with the man, whom she uses as a tool in her hand to satisfy her body needs: "He is the penis-man; she feels sarcastic at the relationship that bears no atom of emotion... she has never felt ecstasy even once; she never reached the moment of 'shiver', but each time he asked her if she is enjoying it, she would shut her eyes and say in a hypocrite voice: 'very much'!"⁴⁸

The question that rises here is this: If Nādyā knows all these sins and blatant negativities and misdeeds that exist specifically in the doctor's self, and this is his behavior, why did she hand him her body and colluded with him in tarnishing her body in his farm?

In my opinion, and according to a tight psychological viewpoint, Hayfā' Bayṭār puts us amidst a hellish circle in which the cunning unconsciousness puts its traps. It's no wonder that Freud used to say that the authors, and he meant Sophocles, Shakespeare, an Dostoyevsky are my teachers, and he used to emphasize that poets and novelists 'are our confidential allies, and their witnesses should be highly evaluated, because they do things between earth and heaven about which, our school wisdom cannot dream'. Freud also says that complexes and nervous psychological components are planted in the soil of unconsciousness since childhood and stay till maturity under the fist of repression and suppression of the two social and unjust religious authorities.

But they remain restless and confusedly lurking and waiting for opportunities. The Unconsciousness is clever and knows how to create emptying paths of these motivations that aim and want departure and satisfaction., but because the internal censor / the psychological policeman is awake and alert, he might take a nap, and he might feel upset, he has to be victorious through intellectualized, rationalized and projected consultations. All these defensive instrumentalities employ the feeling as a mine breaker in front of them and hide behind them through absencing the insight of feeling and the eye of the censor⁴⁹.

Therefore, Nādyā, from the beginning, realized what was taking place within her, and she felt that it was social injustice that she should bury her instinct instead of letting it see the light, especially that she was strongly convinced that after she has become fifty years old, and her search for a performer who can launch her imprisoned possibilities is completely her legitimate right. This is the rational cover that has white intentions, but these 'white intentions' constitute the straight way to her catastrophe, because the sinful incentives of her unconsciousness hide themselves behind them. Therefore, Nādyā feels that she has already started living in a swirl with her soul and body: "But did that violated sexual relationship blow up all that smashing revolution in her depths?"⁵⁰

Nādyā gathers her 'spinster' friends to declare in front of them that she had her first sexual intercourse experiences, which turns the whole session into a competition of revelations: "Nādyā invited her friends to dinner at a luxurious hotel on reaching fifty. Her decision was that she would tell

them about giving up her virginity by her experience of sexual intercourse ..."⁵¹ so that they alternate narrating their sexual experiences with bitterness that was generated by years of deprivation and falseness that their society tried to plant in their minds as principles and values. The friends' confessions are introduced alternately; the competition of revelations continues till Sanā reveals her experience with her brother's friend, who deflowered her and then told another friend, who tried to blackmail her so that he can achieve his goal from her: "You will not believe me if I tell you that I decided to enter the experience of the body after I read an article titled '*Ghazal al-Misk/Ghazelle of Musk*'. when I finished reading this essay, I found myself wondering: who extracted the musk-gland from the human beings? Why did they bring us up fearing 'sex' and consider it 'rotten'?"⁵²

Taghrīd also tells her friends how she decided to have her first experience with her childhood friend, who became a well-known personality as a university professor and an ambassador. Here, a specific indicative and suggestive sentence strikes us, when the ambassador says to Taghrīd during their meeting in his suite at a magnificent hotel that she had a body of a twenty years old girl, her reply was only this: "Nothing passed by me except time and the man"⁵³. Taghrīd points out her frustration by saying: "He led my hands to catch a trivial extra organ between his thighs; I felt some malignant happiness because he looked embarrassed; I knew the man's organ from the sexual movies that I watch secretly. I cursed my luck and said to myself: it seems that you will exit as a 'Miss' as you entered the suite as 'Mr.' Ambassador"⁵⁴.

Sonia, however, tells her friends how her first sexual adventure was with her colleague at work, and how she started wishing if she could marry him secretly, and she hinted at that to him. He rejected the idea so strongly that she felt humiliated and small before he cut their relationship by repudiating their love dating. Sonia justifies that by claiming that this man suffers from of his wife and she calls that suffering a 'Wife Phobia'.

At the end of the meeting, the group remember their absent friend, Dou'ā, who sought shelter in religion and smashed her sex instinct, and deleted from her memory the days of mad sex agitation, seeking to purify her soul: "... the whole world turned in her view into a large bar (= penis)... and felt that her organ was worn as a result of practicing masturbation⁵⁵. It is necessary to point out here that the writer excelled in analyzing Dou'ā's character and embodying it in its emotions, thoughts and deliriums. She also succeeded in creating a virtual world that compensates her for a world that she sees mortal and transient, in this way, the writer shows how religion turns into an anti-life power.

With regard to the psychological effects that the spinster is exposed to, Buthayna al-'Iraqi (2008) says: "The woman in her spontaneity tends to be affable with her partner; her inability to get this right exposes her to frustration and emotional and spiritual vacuum; therefore, gynecologists maintain that the woman feels that she has no balance when she approaches the 'age of despair'; if she has no luck to get married and give birth, her psychological condition deteriorates and as a result of that, she lives in loneliness, introversion,

anxiety, aggression, and grudge against people, where the spinster throws her blame on the society men who kept away from her, and she feels of jealousy of married girls of her age. Besides, people's complimentary wishes for her to get married make her escape from facing people and she prefers to live in loneliness or making friendship with those who are of the same age. Therefore, she looks at society with envy and hatred, which she expresses in a nervous and aggressive behavior against the individuals of her society⁵⁶.

After her exposition of the pain of her spinsters and their suffering, whose narration ranged between recollections and intimate self-revelation, the writer moves to a more realistic approach of her subject, when the novel introduces a new focal character called, Hanādy, a doctorate candidate in Psychological Medicine. Hanādy receives an invitation to attend a conference on spinsterhood: "After the souls of her closed women dwell in her, she decides to participate in the conference to present a lecture in which she slaps all the participants, and reveals the truth of the pain that women who miss the train of marriage live, and consequently, their society sentences them to 'slow death'⁵⁷. Dr. Hanādy presents a deep study with the title, " 'Spinsterhood as a Phenomenon That Threatens Society'".

The lecture is a psychological study that deals with the phenomenon of 'spinsterhood' in the Arab world and points out the emotional human aspect of the data and the scientific statistics. She also emphasizes the significance of taking into consideration this segment of women, while she introduced the statistics and scientific numbers, which made her teacher, Dr. Nasser, the Dean of the Faculty of Psychiatry to refuse her dissertation and tells her the following: "What you introduced is not a scientific study; what you introduced is something that I do not know what to call it, it is scandalous!"⁵⁸. The Committee of the *Viva Voci* asks her to reconsider her dissertation, titled: "A Psychological Study of Spinsterhood in the Arab World. Despair occupies her, and she feels disappointment with regard to spinster women who put their trust in her and revealed their depths and ruin that the conference caused to them. The images of Hāla, Amāl, and Jūlie come successively to her mind: "She thought with sorrow that all her enthusiasm to achieve her project about the spinsters' psychological and emotional life was belittled; she felt that she was lost, and as if she did not offer herself for three months in registering unachieved women's specifications; women who were buried in silence and suppression; women who live such a closed life that causes amazement"⁵⁹.

After Hanādi's marriage, which lasts for five years, "the spinsters feel as if they were one woman; and she actually feels united with them. It is true that she got married, but her marriage does not last more than five years, and she finds herself a lonely divorced woman, who has to face a society that stays up caring about her renown day and night..."⁶⁰

Hanādi talks depending on her doctorate dissertation and her expertise in her psychological clinic, about Amāl's suicide, who says in her memoirs: "No man has ever touched me; I am not merely an ordinary virgin, but an ideal case of extreme virginity, as I do not know what a kiss is!"⁶¹. We also read: "... and Amāl, who wanted to inaugurate her

freedom by breaking their authority and disappearance from their life, by choosing the ideal action of freedom – death"⁶². Dr. Hanādi tells Hāla's story, who chose when she became forty years old, a boyfriend who is thirteen years younger than her: "I needed that young adulterer to please me... to invade him... to practice with him what I could not practice at all; to request from him anything that I desire, because the woman cannot request what delights her except from an adulterer, as the man requests from a prostitute"⁶³.

Jūlie, however, says that she is the captain of her ship of pleasure: "... she defied the authority of society and its domination on her life by the act of sex, because 'sex' is 'life' as Jūlie declares without shame"⁶⁴. When Jūlie's sister had a nervous breakdown, we realize that the cause is her discovery of a sinful relationship between her husband and her sister, Jūlie. Jūlie justifies the issue to her psychologist saying: "Do you know, I think that I made a service to my sister, as my relationship that people call 'sinful' with her husband made him become more gentle and delicate with her; he himself admitted to me that after our meetings, he became more lively and more understanding to his wife and children"⁶⁵.

The novel ends after Dr. Hanādy receives a stamped envelope without the name of the sender two days before the conference. The envelope has a message. One line of the message refers to a growth of a lesbian relationship between the sender of the message and her partner, after her deprivation from the man and her lust for life. She turned into a lesbian relationship as a compensates for the man by a woman who is like her in her pain and suffering. The end is a result of suppression and deprivation and the effects of ruin and defects in the human relations. In Dr Hanādy's opinion, suppression among women leads to lesbian relationships, which she considers blessed crimes as long as they take place secretly and not publicly: "We can be anyone of your dissertation's spinsters; we can be any spinster that you did not meet..."⁶⁶. The message continues to say: "My dear, Dr. Hanādy., but how did desire inflame between us like a match that suddenly lighted a dark bottom?! What deviated our feelings and inflamed desire between us? Did she love in me that man whom she had always waited for? I have never been in my life a woman who had lesbian feelings ... my friend who became my 'girlfriend' or mistress. she is more wonderful than a man who will come or will not come; her touches and caresses make me feel ecstasy that I have never imagined..."⁶⁷. Hanādy waves the message in her hand from the bottom of her heart; and she reorganizes her thoughts: "Dr. Hanādy was captivated by her awe... and without an atom of regret, she took out the elegant sheets from their drawer, and in a quick glance, she looked at her intervention and tore it into pieces, and fell down on the sofa; a weak voice started rising and rising with a loud shaking expression: 'blessed silent crimes' "⁶⁸

Baytār uses *sociology* in the novel of the study as a pretext through Dr Hanād's character and her human research in the phenomenon of 'spinsterhood' and narrates the characters of the spinsters by their voices without falling into blatant declarativity. This use of human sciences in order to

understand the characters and introduce them in a true way says that Hayfā' Bayṭār is so concerned with the structures of the character and its contradictions that their destinies and experiences become the factors that decide the fictional frames and techniques and not the opposite. Therefore, we notice that Hayfā' Bayṭār often makes use of *psychology* to evacuate the suppression, deprivation, despair and pain that her characters stored in their societies. She interrogates them over many pages with a rich store of vocabulary, expressions, and images, employing all her writing abilities in depicting the forms of hatred, despair, contempt, and their variations.

Depending on the common idea that literature is an expression of the experience of the human being through an aesthetic structure that he creates in the mental section and embodies it in a figurative language that is able to convey the experience, interpreting it and criticizing it, we can say that both the man and the woman are interested in this expression through their creative texts.

The woman often tries to feminize life, while the man tries to masculinize it, leaning on his legacy that is abundant with male customs and traditions. Hence, the man is embodied and formulated by most women writers through a relationship of masculinity and femininity that ranges between negativity and positivity in accordance with the event and human attitude, and with dependence on a formula that is not established on compatible and balanced foundations that see the woman as a partner with the man and rival to him.

Consequently, in my view, the writer is mostly biased to the woman in her creative texts, as the woman is more affected than the man as a result of her suffering from robbery of her freedom. Therefore, Hayfā' Bayṭār shows an obvious ability in describing contradictory feelings, and she enables us to dive into the depths of the human soul in its hopes, frustrations, and failures, in addition to the philosophical touches that offer the artistic work an intellectual dimension. Probably, this is what made the writer focus in her novel on her vision about the subject of 'spinsterhood' and analyze it from the interiorities of her characters who suffer from its effects. Therefore, the writer Hayfā' Bayṭār is characterized by a special ability to describe the contradictory feelings and observe the varied images of the woman's life in the oriental Arab society, and thus, the novel of *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* appears to be a continuation to her fictional project that seeks to expose the woman's sufferings and her struggles with society.

Nādyā, the heroine, is a spinster like her friends. She did not find a shelter in her life except through illegitimate relationships, because she found herself deprived from the minimal components of her human existence, because she had to live like her friends, in a state of clear smashing of the values of their society, which denied their humanity. With regard to 'values', Durkheim says that they are one of the instruments of social control that is independent of the selves of the external individuals and their individual embodiments⁶⁹. Therefore, in my opinion, this cession and alienation from all these values that are not important anymore become clear for the spinsters of the novel.

In my view, Nādyā managed to immerse herself completely in what she was doing and enjoy it with pleasure and

pain at the same time. All or most of the following components (motivations, customs, tendencies, mind, emotions, opinions, beliefs and thoughts, emotions and feelings, and characteristics) led to the division of the character into several roles including: the *borderline character*, which is characterized by instability of psychological condition and confusion of identity, behavior and temper. Consequently, Nādyā, the heroine did not remain the same one, but turned into the highest sign for criticism of society that is losing itself due to its shackles and worn traditions: "Something occurred inside her; she knows that she cannot return to what she used to be at all..."⁷⁰

Nādyā realizes the images of interaction within her, the extent of their ability to express the needs and pressures of the environment, and their effects on her psyche by saying: "You lived stamped and sealed like a bottle of wine for many years; then you decided, too late, to enter life, to taste the men..."⁷¹ In my opinion, the writer's insistence on describing the stages of a life of many contradictions is attributed to the fact that the heroine lives a state of terrible psychological conflict between 'remembrance and forgetting': "For the first time in her life, she took a decision that stems from her entity only, without interference of anyone else... for the first time, she defies them and blows up their moral arguments in which they imprisoned her all her youth."⁷²

What happens to Nādyā was a mini-quake of a confused psychological volcano, of a life of a woman who refuses to surrender, and of a man who refuses defeat in front of a woman, and thus, the conflict intensifies between confused psyches and anxious tempers that are drugged by previous genetic legacies since their childhood growth: "His hand was immediately extended in between her thighs; she was startled and quickly kept his hand away; she averted his rough behavior that made her feel how cheap she is and 'free for all'. Doesn't she really deserve a little affection and tender love words? His fingers returned to infiltrate in between her thighs..."⁷³

All these factors that decide the readiness of the soul to respond in a certain direction, did not help in the internal development of the character in the volcano of her spiritual development; actually, she showed the character in a shape of an alienated creature. She said: "It is a shit of an experience, Nādyā, say it openly... when he separated from her, he went quickly to the bathroom; he did not even throw a look at her... she was stunned and amazed and did not absorb what happened"⁷⁴. This led to her schizophrenia into 'the True I' and the 'False I' and the internal rupture of the character and yearning that dwells in her: "Didn't she turn into a violent woman despite her? Of course, yes, otherwise, what is the interpretation of her shameful fits of anger, her explosion with cries and curses for any trivial reason, and sometimes for no reason?"⁷⁵

We can also consider this language another language of communication, and here, it is necessary to know the nature of this emotional separation. Through this anxious wondering that is accompanied by simultaneous guilt, the character shows its difficulty in achieving its vital goals; and because Nādyā does not feel that she is secure, her feeling of

inferiority, despair and loneliness made her move potential psychological powers to compensate that, as Adler maintains. Consequently, the mind resorts to dominance as a tool that decreases one's feeling of inferiority and self-despise, where it takes several images, which are behavioral models of the character that satisfy its motivations and desires. Consequently, the character adopts 'rebellion' as a tool in order to prove itself assert it,⁷⁶ and to confirm that, we read the following: "When she came out to light, she felt dizzy for a second, and shrank, as if light denuded her depths... she walked like a lost one; the rhythm of her steps repeated the phrase 'You are in the gutter!', 'You are in the gutter!'"⁷⁷. Therefore, Nādyā's rebellion constitutes a self-revelation and emptiness of all the concerns that she lived through the clear dialogue in the novel. Subsequently, we read how Hayfā' Bayṭār deals in *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* with the feelings of the spinster woman and her feelings in her confrontation of that outlook of inferiority that is full of doubt, suspicion, hostility and belittling her as a failing woman. Her feeling of self-protection from contempt, humiliation, cynicism and underestimation besieges her in all her actions: "She had terrible hatred to her family; to those close relatives who claim that they love her... I am not able anymore to live among you like a fetish, waiting for the suitable groom, who will not come at certain moments..."⁷⁸

In my opinion, writing remains the distance of the burning-embers between reality and the fever of imagination. It also remains the area of self-revelation that the writer resorts to in an aim to re-establish the human and realistic scene, and reproduce the desire of fantasy as a reaction to the lived reality whatever its associations are and whatever its cruelty is. When reality besieges the creative woman, she turns to her pen to lead her towards the scene that saves her from the bite of burning in reality and its fragmentations. Hence, it is possible to talk about the content of women novels that managed to describe a relationship that has manifold complex problematics between the man and the woman, and creates along the history a desire to steal its events from the depth of lived reality onto ink.

Consequently, the woman writer had a man with the color of ink and the letter, like the man-writer who has got an ink-woman. In my opinion, Hayfā' Bayṭār in the novel of this study looks at self-revelation as an existential rescue operation, not according to the motto that says "*I write in order not to die*", but according to the motto of "*I reveal myself in order not to die*". Spinsters want to practice their original right in life like all women, though they are besieged by a lot of factors of frustration, breakdown, emotional suffocation in the family under the cover of 'parents' care, and the feeling of nothingness and marginalization in society, and hypocrite religious and social pressures. The father and the mother are the besieging duet who represent the Arab society, who believes, externally, in every progressive thing, but in practice, the matter is completely different. Each of them returns to be a slave to the traditions and customs that suppress the woman, tread on her rights and perpetuate her inferiority: "We should have rebelled when we were thirty years old, and maximum forty years old,

but rebellious women who are fifty years old, would sound funny... a fifty years old woman is a lonely woman, who cannot not find a lover or a partner when she is fifty years old..."⁷⁹

Confession and self-revelation play an important role in the novel. The novel's women who constitute the Association of the Fifty-years old Group include the heroine and her friends. They decrease their pains and tragedies by confession and they reach the point of their spiritual ecstasy by that: "We thank you Nādyā, because you were the most courageous one and you confessed; I need a lot in order to be free of this burden..."⁸⁰. Anyway, after the session of sexual confessions of spinster women starts, we read in the novel about the life of frustrated women, who suffer from terrible pain as they have reached the point of abyss and deviation. We read about the beauty of the sado-masochistic confusions, which the writer depicted in the life of her spinsters; the beauty of the warm, controlled, sensual excitements; the beauty of the human conflicts that express the weakness of the human being; the beauty of narration, and the beauty of the glowing poetic language. We read about all this beauty, which is a kind of paranoid and threatened beauty, in my opinion.

Hayfā' Bayṭār writes in that space which is between shadow and origin and between voice and echo through her reflections on the relations between the man and the woman, which looks cynic and sad: "But what kind of sick and misleading thinking made her believe that her fifty years old psychological crisis will be solved just by talking about her virginity?"⁸¹

Nisā' bi Aqfāl focuses on the woman's right in practicing sex and argues that society deprives the woman from this right, and society does not respect the woman and sees her as a commodity, or a piece of goods. The novel gives samples of certain models in the West, who practice sex freely because it is their right, and their society does not deny it for them.

Hayfā' Bayṭār also introduces the problem of sexual suppression among Arab women. Sometimes, we see the women of the novel living in full negativity and anger, and other times, they live in full challenge. Therefore, Bayṭār appears to be a wild defender of the woman's body and her right in having sexual experiences like the man, but behind this call, we also discover a deep crisis in the values of the Arab society that treats the woman by the mentality of the slave, who has no right to deal with herself as she likes, even if the woman is an educated one and has got a good mind, like Dr. Hanādy, whose teacher refused her dissertation about "Spinsterhood in the Arab World" on the grounds that 'she is a woman who lost the scientific way': "Her teacher's statement – you have lost the right way... what you introduced is not a scientific study; what you introduced is something that I do not know what to call it, it is scandalous"⁸².

From his point of view and society's view, "she has to remain the student, and he is the teacher; she should stay the woman and he should remain the man; she should be under him and he should remain above her... these are the rules of psychology as he understands it in his depths"⁸³. Therefore,

we say that Hayfā' Bayṭār's pen knows how to touch the deep invisible wound of the victims of spinsterhood, and it goes beyond that through its description of female features in frightening fictional scenes that never leave the mentality of the receiver even for seconds.

Ultimately, this phenomenon, in my view, is larger than its being an issue of satisfaction of a sexual intercourse; it is a sensitive issue that deserves looking into its human dimension. We can add that the issue of sexual satisfaction, is employed as a novelistic device that makes the heroine talk about the men who passed through her life, and so, the novel becomes a novel of a woman who reads the man's world. The woman has the right to break the silence and disclose what is hidden in her depths, as it is impossible to know the other if he / she does not talk⁸⁴. In my opinion, sexual rebellion constitutes another reflection of the dialectic of 'oppression' in the woman, who emphasizes that she has the right on her body and feelings such as the spinsters' rebellion in the novel.

In my view, the Arab woman writer introduces the man in her writings either as a convicted oppressive person, about whom she talks in a protesting tone and without reservation, or as a rival, but with a lot of reservation and indirect exposition in attacking and convicting him. However, some women writers pretend that they keep away from the man because he is 'oppressive', but they claim that their writings deal with the human concern in general without defining the gender of that concern, but the investigating eye that looks through their writings thoroughly sees beyond and deeper than that because the woman writer who claims that is in crisis due to her division of the world into a 'man' and a 'woman'. About that, I say that the man exists, and he is a 'soul' and a 'body', and it is impossible to embody him in the woman's writing except as models that she knew and coexisted with, or as wonderful dream models whom she wished that those models existed in reality. In short, reality is the basis in structuring the character of the woman and the man. Besides, imagination has a secondary role that completes the physical qualities or other cultural qualities that are not available in reality.

The features of feminine narration in *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* are clear and obvious in her attacking of the man. The woman writer excludes him and abolishes his leading role and shows him as a cruel, raping and suppressing the woman. The main roles are given to the woman, and by that, she regains her status and dominates the text as a sign of the woman's attempt to dominate her reality, and emphasizes her refusal to submit to be dependent on the man. She also strengthens her authority and emphasizes her qualification to be the leader and her desire to destroy the man's authority and demolish the prevailing norms in the male institution.

Probably, the focus on the woman's search of her entity, freedom, love, and yearning to be independent through engaging herself with the sexual experience. Therefore, Hayfā' Bayṭār did not show any mercy to the man, but she gave the woman the opportunity to express her hidden and black worlds, probably in the extreme possible freedom, and dealt with the male characters maliciously. She cut and pasted,

assisted by reality sometimes, and by wishes other times, or by men of dreams and real men who mix and knead, and thus this fictional work produced in the end.

In my opinion, Hayfā' Bayṭār rises in the novel of this study from the private concern to the public concern, where she deals with issues that are taken from the women's life in general, in which she expresses their pains. *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, is an angry cry in the face of the social rules that have destroyed the psychological balance of the spinster women; the Arab woman stands alone and withdraws into alienation with herself. Therefore, the novel is charged with the woman's physical struggles with the man. Therefore, she sought to go deep into those worlds, satisfied with what was called 'the talking silent speech' and made the women alienated Scheherazade, who lived their life in a merciless patriarchal world.

It is a world that can be expressed only by a woman who knew this deep suffering closely, a woman who knew that deep crack that dwells in her depths: "Her soul was suffering from that way in which she addresses herself, but did she start hating herself, really? Actually, she stopped thinking about herself as an independent case, but as one out of thousands, or millions of women, who bury their desires of submission and silence..."⁸⁵ Thus, *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* came up out of deep consciousness of the man's reality as a human being and his existential impasse, and his relationship with the other. Hayfā' Bayṭār's conflict with her male authoritative society heated, and consequently, the dialectic of 'oppression' embodied in her feminist creativity in the woman's defiance of the woman to her metaphorical jailor, which is represented in her conservative, authoritative patriarchal society and its shackles that oppress the woman's human and cultural rights. The woman in these patriarchal societies is located in the margin, dumb, veiled, deprived of love and decision taking.

We read in the novel of the study a schizophrenia that extends all over the novel. The writer intended in a clever way to put the reader in a state of thinking, analysis and justification, and an in advance conclusion to all these facts, which she did not skip over because she had experienced them as a tragic human experience. This way led her to this schizophrenia that is open onto several readings and interpretations of the spinsters of the novel, and consequently, this schizophrenia leads the woman's separation from herself, and thus, once we read about broken suffering self, and the other, we read about the strong liberated rebellious woman: "Something happened inside her; she knows that she cannot be at all the one she used to be..."⁸⁶. In my opinion, this schizophrenia leads to introducing several questions that we cannot skip over because they become more insistent, the more we read in the novel of *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*:

- Was the writer able to reconcile between the spinsters?
- Was the writer able to make one of the spinsters overcome the other?
- Was the writer able to absent 'the super-ego', which is the observer or sensor of the women and is strongly present in the language of self-revelation that characterizes *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*?

- Were the spinster victims to double-standard men, or victims to traditions and customs that contributed to the crystallization of their life?

In view of the above questions, I would like to raise these questions:

- Which type of freedom do the spinsters of *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* look for?
- What type of language does the writer of the novel employ? Is it the language of the body or the language of the mind?

With these essential questions, it is possible to raise issues that the writer Hayfā' Bayṭār dealt with in *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, in a simple transparent language style and in different structures of women characters that have contradictory aspects such as their estrangement with the past that formulated these rebellious characters against rites that were established despite them, and their estrangement with the bitter present that they live.

Hayfā' Bayṭār introduces in the novel of the study an image for the female in its two parts: the *mental* and the *physical*, and in a continuous dialogue about the concept of the complex character and the extent of its internal and external interactions, especially with regard to the sexual experience that mixed with a lived reality and an internal conflict that is based on branched conflicts she adopted as unconscious defensive tools for self-preservation from emotional and social defeat. Bayṭār introduces all that through suppressed states of refusal in her unconsciousness, and her revolution against the emphasis of mental tendency that is based on personal appreciation of the character that deals with several aspects, whether the behavioral aspects or the social directions.

Though the previous description is merely an emotional state, inadaptability to the environment led to the spinsters' internal personal instability through the game of the body, which actually expresses hostility to masculinity. Consequently, these states led to a critical operation to social life (such as, betrayal, sex, oppression, and liberation), and to resistance to the growth of different structures of characters, whose aspects of conflict within them varied regarding the establishment of straight character by establishing a kind of reconciliation and relative harmony with the self, and the external world, which expresses their special concept and that mutual relationship between the character and society.

Femininity is the unconscious aspect of the man and masculinity is the unconscious aspect of the woman. It is the game of presence and absence in their most insidious and complex way, but consciousness is not the character in its entirety. Our consciousness is colored by our culture, our legacy, and our environment. This is similar to the mirror-stage in Lacan's conception⁸⁷ in addition to the fact that the mirror is one of the basics of place furniture in the feminine text. The mirror in the novel *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* is present as if the external and internal body of the woman cannot be expressed except through the 'mirror-moment'. In this moment, the question might be related to a woman who discovers her young body in front of a mirror, and tries to unlock the secrets of its rushing and burning desires, and to be acquainted with her feminine identity. The question might

also be connected to a woman whose body is exhausted and dumbed by her social system and turned into a torn body that is divided by itself.

In the mirror, the present violated body can appear, and it can summon and evoke the other body from the memory of forgetting and even more than that. The images that are established through the texts reveal in their search an impossible body. Inside that body, there is another suppressed body, and that other repressed body does not know how to appear in the novel, except through recollections and self-revelation. In my opinion, the mission of writing the body does not differ from this mission that is performed by the character's recollection or self-revelation as it reveals the body, expresses its desire, and pushes the stagnant body till it bursts up and works on regaining the biological part of the 'Ego' (I), and makes it open onto flowing its natural foundations, which allow it to have some space to operate its phantasms and liberate its suppressed and repressed desires. In the novel, Nādyā realizes her great loss while she is looking into the mirror, and her mirror-self that is reflected in the mirror replies: "When she looks at the mirror, she feels something weird; a woman who looks like her but she is not she; she feels anxious, and repeats to herself: I'm not myself anymore. Her look is a look of a woman who evaluates herself, makes her calculations and realizes how her serious her loss is..."⁸⁸

With regard to the dark room where Sanā offered her body, it can be considered a preparatory step for darkening the forbidden motivations. Sanā says: "Half an hour in a dark room, I went out without virginity and her dignity; I went out feeling that I am lower than a prostitute; regarding 'pleasure', don't ask me about it; I did not feel anything at all..."⁸⁹

Before I close up this section, it is appropriate that we express our opinion on the writer's style of writing. In my opinion, I noticed that the writer employs specific lexical collocations and combination, besides linguistic techniques, thematic motifs, or figurative adjectival imagery that end with the suffix "-iyya" in Arabic. The infection of style can pass from the writer to the reader, which is one of her lexical restraints, which we notice in the writer's repeated employment in plenty, in addition to her consecutive repetition of exclamations. Among the other stylistic features of Hayfā' Bayṭār in *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* is her queries and wonderings and questions that have no answers, or that their satisfactory answers are buried under the piles of the suffocating, shameful, and forbidden shackles of the system, which surrounded the movement of the woman's life and choked her as they choked the life of the spinsters and violated it. Nadia's queries have no answers because they originally do not look for satisfactory answers and they are just queries.

It is clear from the novel's beginning, middle and end, that Hayfā' Bayṭār masters her subject matter and its fundamental goal. It is a subject that she mostly observed through her personal experiences in her daily life, her studies, her professional life, and her social life. The goal that her artistic discourse aims at, and which she introduced through her confident, straight, and short sentences, besides her direct narration that is introduced in the first-person singular pronoun

(I), and the third person singular pronoun (he), which enjoys full freedom of self-revelation.

Hayfā' Bayṭār wrote her novel, using the third person singular pronoun (he) to describe the spinsters' life, which was smashed by the social and patriarchal taboos. They are spinsters with fragile intentions that look for freedom, emotional and sexual flowering, but they do not find anything except the suffocating smoke of frustration. On the linguistic level, Hayfā' Bayṭār introduced a flowing poetic language, through which she overcame the length of the narration, which was introduced sometimes by the speaker, Nādyā, through exposing her suffering.

The structure of the novel is well-done and tight. It introduces characters with visions that invite analysis. Hayfā' Bayṭār shows extremely high daring in introducing intimate topics. She does not hint but she speaks openly and publicly. She exposes, characterizes, analyses, but does not fall in direct reporting. Bayṭār inserts a strong critical dose in her novel as a writer and a woman medical doctor. The daring and the dose beg to cure the oriental man of his duality on one or more levels, especially those that are related the sexual aspects of his life.

The fictional narrative in the novel is tight, and the events are sequential. Her language is appropriate for the subject of the novel. Her description of the characters and progression of time is smooth. Besides, she expressed the impact of time in a wonderful way. Bayṭār also used her professional skills and employed them in the service of the thought and the text.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The female body in the Arab feminist literary movement occupied the narrative forefront. What it sought to achieve is to search and investigate the ladder of the prevailing Arab social and cultural values through which the Arab woman is turned into a weak and inferior creature versus the man and his virility, no matter what his intellectual, moral and financial level is.

Hayfā' Bayṭār depicts in a daring and true way the interiorities of the Arab female, and she writes in a vital language about the concerns that dwell her imagination. In her creative works in general, she deals with a group of subjects that are derived from the depth of the Arab society, especially those that are related to the suffering of the Arab woman.

Hayfā' Bayṭār managed, and with a lot of daring, to reveal the hidden and she is considered one of the writers who penetrated the taboo of sex audaciously. She dealt with it intensively in a part of what the spinsters of the novel did, as a remedial instrumentality, with which she broke the bars. However, breaking up the taboo of sex is the prominent challenge in her undermining of the social norms, as well as the literary norms that the man established.

Hayfā' Bayṭār introduces in her novel *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* a serious social problem through a loud cry that she launches, in which she says that the woman remains a prisoner all her years of spinsterhood. At the same time, she has the right as a human creature to satisfy her instincts, especially the sexual one. The sharpness of refusal to the principles of the male world that hates the idea of 'equality' rises in Bayṭār's novel. This is not a new thing in her previous writings, which

carried the woman's concerns and introduced them as a repeated theme in her novels and stories. She also raises her direct accusation to the man's domination. In the novel of the study, there is an indirect call to the man to respect the woman's humanity and not to summarize her into a body or a womb. She is an equal creature to the man in their human value even if we differ physiologically.

Nisā' bi Aqfāl is considered a rich novel from various perspectives and it can also raise rich controversy because it raises a lot of questions made by the Arab woman who lives in a hypocritical society that suffers from a cultural and epistemological personality schizophrenia, through duality of a split character and double standards.

In my opinion, this novel can be called '*the novel of spinsters*', if we may say so. It is another description in which we borrow the gifts of the feminine world that surrenders to the injustice of masculinity. It is a novel of torn, shaken, frustrated and challenging characters. It is also a kind of literary revenge on a patriarchal society as Bayṭār talks about the theme of spinsters' suffering and she employs it in the service of the woman's issues in the Arab society.

In my opinion, it is necessary to break the women's silence as a basic ambulatory step that helps them to bridge over the narrow concept of femininity with which society insists on chaining them. One of the qualities of that femininity is meekness, shyness, and silence. By that, the woman becomes merely a female and not a human being who has the right to express herself, her depths, and her way as another sex in reading the world, and specifically the world of the man, who is the legislator of laws and morals, too. It is actually the authority that gives priority to the woman's youth and her young age and considers women at their menopause as invalid creatures or non-sexual creatures, ignoring that menopause affects the man more than the woman.

In my opinion, the woman will realize ultimately that breaking the shackles of silence is her only liberator from inferiority, loneliness, insecurity, fear, suspicion, and negative outlook at life and inability to feel pleasant. The women's breaking of silence is the only tool of knowing them as human beings first, and as females, second, so that there will be compatibility and balance in their relationship with the man. When the woman reveals her suffering and breaks her silence, she achieves her humanity and overcomes her neurosis and sadness, and becomes active, giving, and happy. Therefore, the writer urges women to be courageous in their confrontation and bridging over the horror of the first jump towards freedom of speech. The novel of *Nisā' bi Aqfāl* is a completion of the revolution of confession and revelation against a social reality, and a religious patriarchal authority that subjugated them, and traditions that shackled them.

In my opinion, Bayṭār managed to approach the bedrooms that possess their special aesthetics, and succeeded in copying what happens in them; bedrooms constitute an important matter, which, supposedly, should not be underestimated; otherwise, the result will be like any other low scene in a low cheap movie.

Finally, we can say that literature is for the giants, and therefore it does not bear joking, and writing about sex is a

penetration of taboos, which is a sensitive issue that requires intelligence and taste, and a pen that possesses a great artistry that can hunt a moment of lust scenes in the novel, which come in their natural context.

The novelty and originality of this research lies in its being a pioneering investigation in a serious feminist issue in the Arab world, which is the forced spinsterhood of Arab girls whose parents keep them unmarried for personal, or materialistic reasons.

Besides, there is shortage of literary studies on the subject, and most studies that have been done on the subject are field studies that deal with the issue from a social points of view.

In addition, most writers, mainly male writers, avoid dealing with this issue due to its sensitivity, socially and psychologically.

Finally, the issue of spinsterhood has become very serious in the modern era as a result of the woman's economic and educational freedom, the woman's liberation movement, and her involvement in the globalized world. The study hopes to motivate other researchers to conduct similar studies that deal with the problem of spinsterhood in their societies.

END NOTES

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4. Ma'tuq, Frederick (1993). *Mu'jam al-'Ulūm al-Ijtima'ya*. Beirut: Academia. P. 59.
5. 'Abdalla, 'Abd al-Mun'em 'Uthman (2005). *Al-'Unusa: Asbabuha wa Atharuha wa 'Itajuha*. 1st ed. Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-'Arabiya, p. 34.
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7. The poem "يوم قففت حملهم فتولوا" *Yawma qaffat Humoluhum Fatawalloo*" by al-'Asha, Qays bin Maymun bin Qays. He was called al-'Asha because he was visually impaired. He belongs to the first-class poets in Jahiliya.
8. The poem "مخدرة مكنونة قد تكشفت" *Mukhadara maknouna qad takashaft*" by Abu al-Hasan Ibn Tabataba.
9. The poem: "قد قلت للمسدود في عابئ" *Qad qultu li al-masudud fi anis*" by al-Buhturi.
10. The poem "أوحشني الأوائس" *awhashani al-awanis*" by Ibn Sana' al-Mulk.
11. The poem "لو ذرى كيف موقع العدل مني" *law dara kayfa mawqi' al-'adhl mini*" by Ibn al-Rumi. He lived in the Abbasid period.
12. Al-Tha'alibi, 'Abd al-Malik Abu Mansour (2000). *Fiqh al-Lugha wa Asrar al-'Arabiya*. 2nd ed. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Assriya, p. 111.
13. The poem "كأنما هي عابئ تصدئ" *Ka'annama hiya anis tasadda*" by Ma'n bin Aws al-Muzni. He lived in Jahiliya period and Islamic period.
14. The poem "مهزت الفتاة الأحمسية نثرة" *Mahartu al-fatah al-ahmasiya nathratan*" by Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri. He lived in the Abbasid period.
15. The poem "محللك من وصل الأحيبة أنس" *Mahaluka min wasli al-ahibba Anisu*" by al-Sari al-Raffa.
16. The poem "ألا ليت شعري هل تنتظر خالد" *Ala layta shi'ri hal tanazara khakidon*" by Abi Du'aib al-Hudhali. He lived in Jahiliya period and Islamic period.
17. Hayfā' Baytār is a Syrian optician and novelist, who was born in (1960) in Latakia. She is also a critic and essayist. Her first work was published in 1992. So far, she has published a collection of short stories, nine novels. Her works have been translated into a number of foreign languages.
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19. Jaballa, Yamina & al-Hashimi, Lukya (2007). "Māna al-Ĥaya wa 'Alaqtuha bi al-Ihtiraq al-Nafsi lada al-Mar'a al-'Āmila al-'Ānis. An M.A. thesis. University of Baskara. Algeria, p. 45.
20. Sulaymani, 'Alā' defines "al-waṣm الوصم" as follows: "Waṣm" means: giving undesired names by other people to the individuals in such a way that deprives him from being accepted socially because he is a different person, physically, mentally psychologically, and socially, which makes him feel lose his psychological and social balance. The concept of "waṣm" appeared in the naming theory by Goffman in his book: *al-Waṣma / Stigma* (1963), in which he refers to the inferiority relationship that deprives the individual from full social acceptance. For more information about influence of "waṣm" on the relationship between individuals and the community, see: Sulaymani, 'Alā' (1997). 'Ala Namaṭ al-Waṣm wa Natāijuhu fi Mintaqat Makka al-Mukarramah. An M.A. thesis. Al-Zaqaziq University. Cairo: p. 38-41.
21. It is possible to define the concept of social deviation as a behavior that is not committed to the rules of accepted social standards by a large number of the group or the local or general public. Deviation, in general is non-commitment to all the rules that society defined and are fulfilled by its individuals. For more information, see: Yankin, Mitchell (1986). *Mu'jam 'Ilm al-Ijtima'* (1984). Tr. by Ihsan Mohammad al-Hasan. Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a. p. 73.
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- Dalā'il al-Khayrat li al-Sawtiya wa al-Mar'iyat*. 1st ed. Algeria, p. 154.
26. 'Adel, Fawzi (1989-1990). *Formation in du Lien Conjugal et Modeles Familiaux*. Universite de Paris, p. 2.
27. Bitar, Hayfā', *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, p. 57.
28. Ibid., p. 5.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 6.
31. Ibid., p. 5, 11.
32. Ibid., p. 9.
33. Ibid., P. 9.
34. Frehat, Mariam Jaber (1995). *Shakhṣiyat al-Mar'ah fi al-Qiṣa al-Qaṣira fi al-'Urdon*. Irbid: Dar al-Kindi, p.47.
35. Baytār, Hayfā', *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, p. 10-11.
36. Ibid., p. 14.
37. Ibid., p. 16-17.
38. Ibid., p. 18.
39. Ibid., P. 18
40. Ibid., p. 23.
41. Ibid., p. 31.
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43. Ibid., p. 49.
44. Ibid., p. 49.
45. Ibid., p. 12.
46. Ibid., p. 49-50.
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50. Baytār, Hayfā', *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, p. 34.
51. Ibid., p. 58.
52. Ibid., p. 59.
53. Ibid., p. 66.
54. Ibid., p. 66-76.
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57. Baytār, Hayfā', *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, p. 120.
58. Ibid., p. 100.
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78. Ibid., p. 32-33.
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82. Ibid., p. 99-100.
83. Ibid., p. 101-102.
84. In one of her interviews, Hayfā' Baytār said: "In most of my works, I adopted the issue of the woman in her human dimension, and her relationship with the environment around her, and I did not leave any womanly issue that I have never dealt any issue without diving into its depths to analyze it. The novel that expresses the issue of the woman in my works. She says: "I write the novel because I like to be a witness to the age that I live in. Consequently, as Milan Kundera says in his book *The Art of the Novel*, "what the novel can say, no other cannot be said by any other art." One day I said: The woman is buried in 'silence', and my mission is to break women's silence, not for a provocative or scandalous goal, but in order to know this great beautiful creature: the woman." When she was twenty-five years old as an optician in Latakia, she had an only daughter who was not one-year old daughter. She filed a suit for divorce because she could not continue her conjugal life. She drowned in her suffering with the religious Christian courts, which sentenced her by 'desertion' for seven years, during which she lived a burning period of life of anger, refusal, and a feeling of injustice and persecution and oppression. However, this experience made her change into a rich productive writer. See: <https://akhbarak.net/news>
85. Hayfā' Baytār, *Nisā' bi Aqfāl*, p. 26.
86. Ibid., p. 36.
87. In the mirror-period, we face the mirror-image that the world reflects on us, but the image is exactly as the image of a real mirror, a violated one that leads to wrong acquaintance, which continues to constitute what we think of as our real identity. However, in Lacan's view, we need the response and acknowledgement of the Others and the "Other" in order to reach what we live as our identity. In other words, our entity is achieved through its interaction with the others, namely, with individuals who resemble us in a way or the other, but also, they differ from us in a clear way. Thus, we become ourselves through the other outlooks – other perspectives – that are different from us. We become ourselves, too, through the others' point of view. The 'Other' – who introduces the question of the self' existence in front of the self – is not a real concrete individual (even if her is embodied in a real person, such as a father or a mother),

but represents the general social system. because our identity is formulated through interaction with what exists outside ourselves that reflects us, it is a matter of relationships. Identity is not something fixed or settled. It is a process that is never completed. Besides, identity is not only a prey for constant change, and it is not coherent either. 'Identity' is a linguistic structure; we are built up in language or from language, and through this language the imaginative representations are formulated about the female body. For more details, See: Roland Doron, Bareau Francoise (1996). *Mawsu'at 'Ilm al-Nafs*. Vol.1, Beirut: Manshurat 'Uweidat. <http://nadyelfikr.net>

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